

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7494

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPACFLT

COMSEVENTHFLT

CNO WASHDC

CHINFO WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

ISCOM DIEGO GARCIA

CINC MAC SCOTT AFB IL

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCLR, SN

SUBJ: DIEGO GARCIA NEWS MEDIA VISIT ESCORT REPORT

1. SUMMARY: THE FIRST VISIT OF JOURNALISTS TO DIEGO GARCIA APPEARS TO HAVE MET ESTABLISHED OBJECTIVES. FOR THE MOST PART THE FOCUS WAS ON THE ISLAND AND ITS FACILITIES, DESPITE INTENSE PRESS INTEREST ON BROADER QUESTIONS OF REGIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND ARMS CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

2. US AND UK ON-ISLAND MILITARY BRIEFINGS WERE WELL DONE, AND ADHERED TO EXTANT GUIDANCE. MEDIA REPS PROBED TO DETERMINE FULL CAPABILITIES OF THE FACILITIES WHEN CONSTRUCTION IS
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COMPLETED, AS WELL AS PRESENT CAPACITY FOR AIRCRAFT, SHIP AND SUBMARINE SUPPORT. MILITARY CONSTRUCTION FUNDING QUESTIONS WERE LIMITED TO AUTHORIZED/APPROPRIATED FUNDS, PLUS THE 7.3 MILLION FY-78 INCREMENT NOW BEFORE CONGRESS. WE ANTICIPATE THAT MEDIA WILL DRAW HEAVILY ON NOYES' STATEMENTS IN SEPT 25, 1975 ISSUE OF COMMANDERS DIGEST FOR "FULL COST" FIGURE. PRESS SOUGHT A FULL EXPLICATION OF CURRENT US INDIAN OCEAN POLICY IN

LIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS ON BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE USSR, AND HIS OBJECTIVE OF INDIAN OCEAN DEMILITARIZATION. THESE QUESTIONS WERE REFERRED TO WASHINGTON, EXCEPT FOR THOSE ANSWERABLE WITH EXISTING GUIDANCE. ALSO REFERRED TO WASHINGTON WERE REQUESTS FOR COMPARISON OF DIEGO GARCIA WITH SOVIET FACILITIES IN SOMALIA. MANY OF THE PRESS MAY DRAW ON BARTLETT REPORT AND HAMILTON SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT REGARDING THOSE SOVIET FACILITIES.

3. AREAS NOT WELL DEFINED FOR THE PRESS INCLUDE SPECIFIC NUMBERS OF SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT WHICH COULD BE LOGISTICALLY SUPPORTED BY DIEGO GARCIA, AND FOR HOW LONG, AND INDIAN OCEAN STRATEGIC/MILITARY/SECURITY POLICY, WHICH WAS REFERRED TO WASHINGTON.

4. BY PREARRANGEMENT WITH UK REPS, ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING MAURITIUS, SEYCHELLES, MAURITIAN MINORITY PARTY TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY, THE RESETTLEMENT OF FORMER INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND (AND THEIR COMPENSATION) WERE REFERRED TO THE UK, WHICH FOLLOWED PRESS GUIDANCE AND PRIOR UNDERSTANDINGS. MANY OF THE PRESS HAD A STATEMENT ON INDIAN OCEAN DEMILITARIZATION ISSUED BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN SINGAPORE. THIS WAS A REHASH OF THE QUOTE WE HAVE NO BASES, AND THE IMPERIALISTS MUST DISMANTLE THEIR BASES (PLURAL) UNQUOTE RHETORIC. THE SOVIET EFFORT WAS PEDESTRIAN AND COMPARED MOST UNFAVORABLY WITH THE BALANCED AND OPEN HANDOUTS IN THE US PRESS KIT.

5. RESPONSIVENESS OF NAVY PERSONNEL IMPRESSED JOURNALISTS. CBS, NBC TV, AND NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWS WITH SAILORS RE LIVING CONFIDENTIAL

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CONDITIONS (AUSTERE), WOMEN (LACK OF) AND IMPACT OF PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS ON DEMILITARIZATION ON TROOP MORALE RESULTED IN UPBEAT, POSITIVE RESPONSES. OBVIOUS HIGH STATE OF ISLAND MORALE, MILITARY SMARTNESS AND ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB AT HAND WERE NOTEWORTHY.

6. MYDANS, TIME INC. PHOTOGRAPHER TOOK SOLO PHOTO TOUR, TV CREWS FOCUSED ON ACTION ITEMS, INCLUDING C-141 LANDING, POL TANK GROUND PREPARATION, ROCK CRUSHING AND CANTONMENT AREA. PRINT MEDIA FOLLOWED PREPARED TOUR.

7. USIA MEDIA GUIDANCE: MANY CORRESPONDENTS HAD STORIES IN ROUGH, WHILE OTHERS PREPARED DRAFTS ON FLIGHT TO DIEGO GARCIA BEFORE HEARING BRIEFS. WRITERS RESEARCH DOCUMENTS WERE MAINLY US, UK, IO LITTORAL NEWS CLIPS, WHICH RANGED FROM TOTALLY SPECULATIVE TO ERUDITE. SOME PRESS HAD VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS, MOST PRE-1975. SOME HAD UP-TO-DATE TIMES/POST CLIPS, AND ALL WERE GIVEN COPY OF 1976 US-UK DIEGO GARCIA AGREEMENT BY UK SIDE. SOME HAD AFOREMENTIONED BARTLETT AND

HAMILTON REPORTS. DESPITE ADEPT UK HANDLING, WE EXPECT THAT SO-CALLED REFUGEE PROBLEM MAY SURFACE IN SOME STORIES. CHECK CLOSELY COST FIGURES, SIMPLE COMPARISONS USED TO INDICATE DIEGO GARCIA UTILIZATION, SIZE, AND IMPORTANCE TO US AND BILATERAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT. OUTPUT PREDICTED TO APPEAR AS THOUGHTFUL BY-LINERS FOLLOWED BY SUNDAY EXPANSIONERS. ISLAND TOUR PROBABLE PEG LARDED WITH SPECULATION ON US INDIAN OCEAN POLICY, STRATEGY, OPINIONS FROM AREA'S LEADING MILITARY AND POLITICAL PUNDITS. AGENCY OUTPUT SHOULD BE LIMITED TO FACTS OF TOUR WITH GUIDELINE REFERENCE POLICY, STRATEGY, AND WITH EMPHASIS ON JOINT ENDEAVOR. AVOID COMMENTARY/ANALYSIS.

8. MEDIA AND UK BIOT ADMINISTRATOR EWANS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY TOP-NOTCH MAC CREW AND THE MEN OF DIEGO GARCIA. STATE, DOD, CINCPACFLT, AND USIA REPS CONCUR. GRANT

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